

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2005

The Honorable James E. Cason
Associate Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Cason

Once again, we write to you with respect to the land-in-trust application of the Oneida Indian Nation of New York (the Nation).

As you are aware, we recently wrote to you about a letter from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Eastern Regional Office, dated September 20, 2005, which advised the Counties of Madison and Oneida, New York that the BIA has "under consideration" a land-in-trust application for the use and benefit of the Oneida Indian Nation, totaling more than 17,000 acres. Specifically, the BIA notified the Counties that they were invited to submit written comments, in increments of 30 days, on the land parcels, which were divided into three groups.

Soon after the September 20th letter, the Counties raised numerous questions about the application process and expressed concern to us about the extremely limited amount of time for written comments. By letter dated October 14, 2005, the Counties wrote to the Acting Director of the BIA Eastern Regional Office, requesting an extension of time to provide comments and information on the parcels that are the subject of the Nation's application (refer to attached letter). In the letter, the Counties point out that "the scope and complexity of this application will require the dedication of substantial County resources as well as the engagement of certain outside contractors to gather, organize and present the comments and information." The Counties further state, "based on consultations with the BIA, Department of Interior, County officials who will be responsible for this work, and outside contractors, we are advised that the time necessary to gather the required data and information is approximately sixty to ninety days."

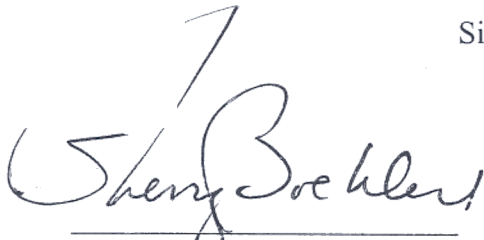
The State of New York (the State) also shares the concerns expressed by the Counties in their October 14th letter and joins them in their request for an extension of time. By letter dated October 17, 2005, the State discusses the difficulties of compiling the information necessary to organize and present comments to the BIA with respect to the application in the time set forth in the September 20th letter (refer to attached letter). The State wrote that "the magnitude of the request and the potential import of approving the application for the State and its citizens warrant full and careful consideration of the facts, and that to achieve that end the State and Counties should be afforded a meaningful amount of time in which to submit information and comments."

Mr. Cason, following several conversations with you and other Department of Interior officials, we know you fully realize the complexity of this issue. In April, we were told that the land-in-trust process would in fact be deliberative, thorough, and time consuming. Additionally, there would not be any "rush to judgment," particularly given the magnitude of the number of lands involved.

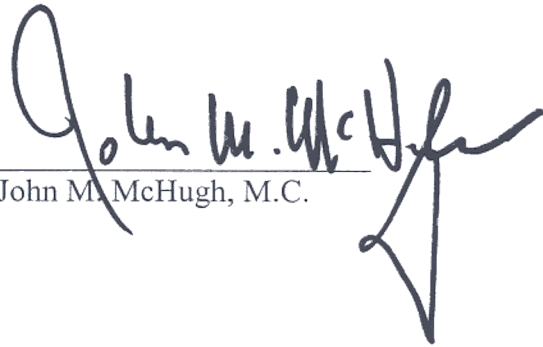
At this juncture, however, we believe that the Counties and the State will not have sufficient time in which to properly comment on an application that has been months in the making. Accordingly, we urge you to give due consideration to the request for an extension of time made by the Counties and the State so that they may be able to give careful consideration to the facts and to provide meaningful comments.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sherwood Boehlert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S".

Sherwood Boehlert, M.C.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John M. McHugh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

John M. McHugh, M.C.